



THAMES LEARNING TRUST

Strategic Plan
2020- 2023

‘Growing Stronger Together’



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Introduction from our Chair and Chief Executive Officer

The Strategic Plan is a document that records how the agreed vision of the Thames Learning Trust is to be implemented and evaluated. It is designed so that everyone involved with the Trust can understand the reasons why the Trust exists and it creates a culture of unity, consistency and support. It sits alongside the structure of the Trust and applies to Members, Trustees, Local Governors and all staff employed by the Trust. It acknowledges that we have a strong foundation built upon sound educational principles supported by a healthy financial background which stands us in good stead as we look to the future. The Trust is led by a supportive and experienced Trust Board, an experienced Chief Executive Officer, a highly experienced Finance Director and a strong central team.

We look to the future growth of the Trust with confidence.

Jon Reekie, Chair of the Board of Trustees

Every great journey is accomplished a step at a time. Our Strategic goals cannot be accomplished by one person in a few weeks but rather they are something that everyone in the Trust needs to learn to do on a day to day basis.

Through trust, encouragement, and collaborative relationships, I believe that we will achieve our goals and ensure that all of our pupils receive the outstanding education that they deserve. Contributing to the development and growth of our staff is at the centre of our aspirations and the means by which we will strive for success.

We are committed to achieving our business goals while seeking to act at all times with openness, integrity and the highest standards of corporate responsibility.

Richard Kearsey, Chief Executive Officer

About us

Thames Learning Trust is a Multi Academy Trust consisting of Academies in the Thames Valley

Academy	Location	Type	Date of joining	Pupil numbers	Latest Ofsted Rating	Website
 Battle Primary Academy	Reading	Primary	01/07/2019	437	2	www.battleprimary.co.uk
 Baylis Court Academy	Slough	Secondary	01/08/2011	893	1	www.bayliscourt.slough.sch.uk/
 Phoenix Infant Academy	Slough	Infant	01/09/2015	324	2	www.phoenixinfants.uk/
 Reading Girls' Academy	Reading	Secondary	01/09/2017	416	N/A	www.readinggirlsschool.co.uk/

Our Values and Our Vision

Our Values are:

- ✓ **We put children first.** We will ensure that our children are at the centre of all of our work and that we strive to give them the best start in life.
- ✓ **We encourage development.** Putting staff development and improving teaching and learning at the heart of what we do.
- ✓ **We are quality driven.** As our family of Academies grows we will ensure that high academic standards are at the core of our work.
- ✓ **We value uniqueness.** Our Academies will grow and develop whilst maintaining their own uniqueness. We value and promote diversity and inclusion.
- ✓ **We work in partnership.** We will work in close partnership and collaborate with all of our stakeholders

Our Vision is:

‘To be recognised and valued by our stakeholders and the communities in which we operate for our transformational and life-enhancing approach to the education of our children. We aim to be a medium* sized Trust.’

* National Governance Association (NGA) define medium as either 6-15 schools or between 1200

Our Strategic Priorities

The focus of our Trust is Academy improvement, governance, people and leadership, financial sustainability and risk management. We work with Academies to ensure that as a family of Academies we are a strong unit. We offer autonomy to schools applying to join to work with us so that they may continue to develop in their own unique way. We do not brand our Academies or take them over. We work with Academies to ensure that by being part of our family they are stronger and excel in meeting the needs of their communities.

We do not believe in expansion at the detriment or neglect of depth but we plan to be a medium sized Trust. This provides us with economies of scale whilst focusing on Academy improvement and support. We aim to work with Academies from both the primary and secondary sector in order to improve the learning experience of our children. We want to facilitate a focus on teaching and learning by enabling teachers and leaders to work together more closely to meet the challenges ahead. Expansion for our Trust means adding value to the Trust. We aim to work with Academies that will make our Trust stronger and more successful at fulfilling our vision.

Our Trust provides Academies with the vehicle for deep collaboration focused on teachers and classroom practice. We are driven by the focus of accelerating pupil progress by empowering teachers to plan, develop, observe and coach each other and by assessing the impact on pupils' learning. Our Trust facilitates this by bringing together a larger team that can provide challenge, professional capital, shared knowledge and expertise that comes from being part of a larger group.

We will work with our Academies. The Executive Team facilitates cluster activity providing research know-how and tools, supplying impact data, and helping to share knowledge.

Against this strong background, the Trust has identified five strategic priorities for the period 2020-2023:

Strategic Priority 1: To increase further the quality of provision in all Trust academies.

Strategic Priority 2: To expand provision for recruitment, training and development such that we maintain an expert workforce

Strategic Priority 3: To develop and grow our Trust

Strategic Priority 4: To build effective partnerships with the communities in which we operate

Strategic Priority 5: To build a financially viable, efficient, risk aware and sustainable Trust for the future

Each priority is described in more detail on the following pages.

Strategic Priority 1:

To increase further the quality of provision in all Trust Academies



Rationale:

Our learners are at the centre of what we do. We want all our pupils to fulfil their potential and achieve their goals and ambitions, and we strive to give our pupils the best start in life that we can. We believe that by having a relentless focus on quality we will deliver this.

How we will achieve it:

1.	To ensure that all Academies in the Trust are performing in the top 10% in terms of their outcomes for all pupil groups and that each Academy in the Trust promotes social mobility and is closing the attainment gap for its SEND and disadvantaged pupils.
2.	To ensure our Academies provide the very best teaching to promote high-quality learning and strong outcomes for our pupils, particularly those from vulnerable groups, enabling staff to make a real difference to pupils in every Academy
3.	To ensure that all Academies improve their Ofsted grading if they were requiring improvement or are in a category of concern on joining the Trust; or maintain their grading if good or outstanding, with the aspiration to improve their grading from good to outstanding.
4.	To ensure that there is a rigorous and robust programme of quality assurance that helps to support staff, build expertise and capacity and raise standards to deliver positive outcomes for pupils.

How we will measure our success:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
National Performance, DfE and FFT, data identifies 50% of Academies in the top 10% for Progress and Attainment.	National Performance, DfE and FFT, data identifies 75% Academies in the top 10% for Progress and Attainment.	National Performance, DfE and FFT, data identifies 100% Academies in the top 10% for Progress and Attainment.
Performance of vulnerable groups to meet agreed targets in each Academy.	Performance of vulnerable groups to meet agreed targets in each Academy.	Performance of vulnerable groups to meet agreed targets in each Academy.
All Academies to be graded good or better by Ofsted.		
0% NEET within all Secondary Schools.		

Strategic Priority 2:

To expand provision for recruitment, training and development such that we maintain an expert workforce



Rationale:

By having a relentless focus on quality recruitment, training and on development of our team, we will provide the best possible outcomes for our pupils and our staff .

How we will achieve it:

1.	Recognising the importance of strong governance we will ensure that our Board of Trustees have the right skill set, all understand their role and are equipped to perform this in a way that enhances the effectiveness of the Trust.
2.	We will operate a high quality appraisal and development system to ensure that all staff can be the best they can be.
3.	We will develop future leaders, at all levels, to ensure effective succession planning for our Academies.
4.	We will implement a Professional Development programme in partnership with local Teaching Alliances to ensure that our staff have the right skills to raise standards further, deliver good teaching and learning, and disseminate best practice in order to grow leaders that can lead, succession plan and talent manage future leaders.
5.	We will attract, develop and retain talented and capable staff to posts in our Academies and central team.

How we will measure our success:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
100% of Trustees complete skills test and Action Plan for improving skills is in place.	Expectation that all Trustees have undertaken training in Finance, Data, Safeguarding and Ofsted.	External assessment of Board of Trustees evidences a high level of skill.
Report on Appraisal outcomes to the Appraisal and Pay committee shows that teachers have been held to account and supported to achieve high standards.	Report on Appraisal outcomes to the Appraisal and Pay committee shows that teachers have been held to account and supported to achieve high standards.	Report on Appraisal outcomes to the Appraisal and Pay committee shows that teachers have been held to account and supported to achieve high standards.
Staff turnover figures are 17%	Staff turnover figures are 14%	Staff over figures are 9%

Strategic Priority 3: To develop and grow our Trust



Rationale:

Strategic growth of our existing Trust to deliver the benefits of cross-phase education in defined geographical communities; and, where appropriate, sponsor existing schools or create new Academy provision to meet the needs of our geographical area and communities.

How we will achieve it:

1.	To grow the Trust in a measured way to ensure that standards are maintained and improved and that there is sufficient capacity to bring about rapid progress as required.
2.	To develop and define the concept of cross-phase Hubs providing pupils with a cohesive educational journey from early years to post 16.
3.	To engage with opportunities to sponsor existing schools or deliver new Academies to meet the needs of our geographical area and communities.
4.	Positive assessment by the DfE at MAT review meeting.

How we will measure our success:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Following robust educational and financial due diligence to grow to a Trust consisting of five academies/free schools.	Following robust educational and financial due diligence to grow to a Trust consisting of six academies/free schools.	Following robust educational and financial due diligence to grow to a Trust consisting of seven academies/free schools.
Colleagues within core subjects, from all phases, work collaboratively to develop a curriculum that improves outcomes for all students.	Colleagues within Ebacc subjects, from all phases, work collaboratively to develop a curriculum that improves outcomes for all students.	Colleagues within all subjects, from all phases, work collaboratively to develop a curriculum that improves outcomes for all students.
Target of 86.3% against Pupil Number Capacity (2532 pupils)	Target of 88.2% against Pupil Number Capacity (2532 pupils)	Target of 86.3% against Pupil Number Capacity (2532 pupils)

Strategic Priority 4:

To build effective partnerships with the communities in which we operate



Rationale:

We want our Academies to be seen as positive partners to the local communities in which they operate. We believe that mutually beneficial relationships are desirable and achievable and will result the best outcomes for our learners. We also believe that operating in a socially responsible manner will support our desire to be a more sustainable Trust.

How we will achieve it:

1.	We will invite meaningful engagement with staff, pupils, parents, employers and the local community to understand their views and perception of our Academies and listen to their feedback.
2.	We will encourage diversity in our leadership teams and Trust Board such that they reflect as far as possible the communities in which we operate.
3.	The Board of Trustees will have a detailed understanding of the Trust Academies and therefore be able to respond to any potential issues and risks identified.

How we will measure our success:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Positive feedback from communities following the establishment of Trust community surgeries/network meetings.		
Two parent Trustees (x1 Primary and x1 Secondary) are appointed.	Develop a marketing/recruitment strategy to recruit trustees that reflect the local community.	Profile of Trustees reflects the diversity of the local community.
All schools meet their PAN on year of entry.		

Strategic Priority 5: To build a financially viable, efficient and sustainable Trust for the future



Rationale: To continue to develop the structure of the organisation; To deliver high quality services and support to academies; To deliver a strong financial plan , whilst maintaining measured and systematic growth against a background of risk awareness and mitigation.

How we will achieve it:

1.	Annual and 3 Year Medium Term, Financial forecasts demonstrate stability and sustainability for all academies across the Trust, while acknowledging risks and opportunities.
2.	The Trust is self-sufficient and not dependent upon external funding other than central government funding.
3.	The Trust is able to effectively manage growing pupil numbers in all of the academies.
4.	Maintain robust risk management that allows measured response to identified threats.
5.	Maintain strict compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements which incorporates value for money.

How we will measure our success: (NB numeric targets are tbc)

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Spend on teaching staff as a % of total expenditure Spend on premises as a % of total expenditure Spend on energy as a % of total expenditure Revenue Trust wide reserve as a % of total expenditure – Average teacher cost £ Pupil to teacher ratio Teacher contract ratio (less than 1.0)	Spend on teaching staff as a % of total expenditure Spend on premises as a % of total expenditure Spend on energy as a % of total expenditure Revenue Trust wide reserve as a % of total expenditure – Average teacher cost £ Pupil to teacher ratio Teacher contract ratio (less than 1.0)	Spend on teaching staff as a % of total expenditure Spend on premises as a % of total expenditure Spend on energy as a % of total expenditure Revenue Trust wide reserve as a % of total expenditure – Average teacher cost £ Pupil to teacher ratio Teacher contract ratio (less than 1.0)
External scrutiny – Responsible Officer Reports / External Audit Management letter -Ensure all prescribed areas of the Academies Financial Handbook are met in full.	External scrutiny – Responsible Officer Reports / External Audit Management letter -Ensure all prescribed areas of the Academies Financial Handbook are met in full.	External scrutiny – Responsible Officer Reports / External Audit Management letter -Ensure all prescribed areas of the Academies Financial Handbook are met in full.

Targets
TBC

Our Top Strategic Risks

We recognise that there are risks to our strategic plan that we will actively monitor and manage



Strategic Risk category	Description
Political	A change in National or Local Government policy
Competition	New academies/schools open that put pressure on pupil numbers within our Academies
Reputational	An inability to recruit pupils as a result of reputational damage
Economic	Prolonged periods of austerity as a result of depressed economic conditions
Technological	New technological developments change the approach to education
People	An inability to recruit and retain the right numbers and quality of staff/ Trustees to deliver the plan
Operational	Internal failures in our controls